

News Release

USDA Forest Service

Los Padres National Forest



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Two Large Areas of Los Padres NF Closed Due To Fire Emergency; **Popular Hunting Area Affected**

GOLETA, CA...Los Padres National Forest Supervisor Gloria Brown announced today she has closed two large areas of the national forest to public entry because of the current fire emergency and her concern for public and firefighter safety. The affected areas include a large tract of land surrounding the Scott and Ridge fires in Kern County, and a large portion of the national forest in northern Santa Barbara County, including the northern San Rafael Wilderness, Sierra Madre Ridge and surrounding public lands.

According to Brown, the closures prohibit public entry to all forest lands, trails, roads and recreation sites within the two designated areas. The closures do not apply to private land. Maps and detailed descriptions of the closures will be posted on the Forest Service website at www.fs.fed.us/r5/lospadres. The public may also call the Forest Service offices in Santa Maria at (805) 925-9538, or Frazier Park at (661) 245-3731 for further information.

The closure in Kern County encompasses all national forest lands north of the Frazier Mountain Road, Cuddy Valley Road and Cerro Noroeste Road between Interstate 5 on the east and the national forest boundary at the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge on the west. This closure affects several campgrounds including the Cherry Creek, Salt Creek, Pleito Creek, Marian, Caballo and Valle Vista. The Tecuya Off-Highway Vehicle trail system is within the closed area.

The closure in northern Santa Barbara County encompasses all national forest lands in the Sisquoc River drainage from Heath Camp and the Judell Trail north. It extends north to Highway 166 and includes all national forest lands in the Colson, La Brea and Painted Rock areas.

Deer hunters in particular will be disappointed to learn that the Sierra Madre Ridge is now off-limits and will likely remain closed at least through the opening of rifle season in state hunting "Zone A." Hunting season opens on August 12. The Forest Service recommends hunters consider using the Figueroa Mountain, Rockfront and Pozo areas in lieu of Sierra Madre Ridge.

"I realize the closure of Sierra Madre Ridge and surrounding forest land is especially bad news for hunters," said Brown, "and I haven't taken this decision lightly. I'm very concerned about the fires' potential to spread rapidly. If that were to occur, it would be impossible to get people out in time. I'm also concerned about the safety of the hundreds of firefighters who are working in these areas," she added.

For more information about the status of fires in Los Padres National Forest, visit <http://www.inciweb.org/>.

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